

Autumn- 2015

Die Gute Nachricht
Die Evangelisch-Lutherische St. Matthäusgemeinde

The Good News
St. Matthew's Lutheran Church



Dear Members and Friends,

'When Jesus saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest." ' Matthew 9:36-38, NRSV

You wouldn't believe what things can be found in the nooks and crannies of a pastor's office (and in its bookshelves). Once in a while I try to do a little cleaning, and sometimes I come across some interesting things. Among the things I found were some pamphlets from decades ago. One of them especially caught my eye. It reads on its cover, **'My Church Needs Me'**.

I think it's quite amazing that being part of the church 'cuts both ways': everyone needs the church, the community that's found here. This is why we

gather, in the name of God, to be connected with each other, to find support and comfort during challenging times, to have brothers and sisters by our side who help carry the manifold loads of life, to have people who share in the joyful celebrations of life. Jesus Christ calls us into community, into communion – and he famously said that, by our love for one another, by our commitment to each other and the community of faith, 'the world' will experience God. The church is an entity where we find community, and a place where we receive abundantly.

But on the flipside, there is nothing to receive, if there is nothing given and shared. You need your church, but your church needs you as well. St. Matthew's is what it is because of you, and because of all who have congregated here over the past 120 years.

There is the danger of making ‘church’ into something abstract. Some may think that ‘the church’ is something ‘other’. Especially in the German speaking community of the Bay Area, I have encountered many who know that St. Matthew’s, ‘the church’, exists, and somehow it is important for folks to know that it exists – even though some folks never take advantage of this house of God being here. For some, it seems, ‘the church’ is something you can go to, if you fell like it, but otherwise has only a marginal connection to people’s lives.

But ‘church’ is much more than that. ‘The church’ is the sum of the people who gather in the name of God. We ARE the church, each and every one, from the infant who was recently baptized to the elder who has been around for decades. ‘My church’ thus is not just a building or a bunch of committees – ‘my church’ is the community of saints, all who gather in the name of God, all who bring their share of pain and joy – but who also bring their special gifts they share with the church. It’s all about give and take, all the time. ‘My church’ is me – and my brothers and sisters in Christ.

‘My church needs me.’ My brothers and sisters in the pew and around the world need me. I can be there for them through prayer, through a gentle touch, and open ear. I can serve the church by being part of a group that makes decisions about God’s ministries in this place and beyond, so that

others are fed in body, mind, and spirit. I can give of my time, my talents, the gifts I have received from God, in order to make this world a better place, a place filled with God’s love and mercy. And, yes, my money is needed to keep the church I am a part of going, so that people can be touched and healed through its ministries. We cannot just rely on dividends on our investment account or on outside groups’ donations for facility use if we want to keep this church, our church, alive – and of course we are facing more financial challenges now that Kinder Haus has moved to a different location.

In the end, it’s all about what we call discipleship. What does it mean to be a follower of Christ, and what are the ways we can fulfill the manifold needs of God’s people, the church? During the fall, you will be invited to explore what the needs of ‘the church’ are – and how you can help fulfill these needs. How you can be a blessing to others, as you are experiencing the blessings of God and church community.

As Jesus said, there is always work to be done. The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. God has no hands but ours, as 14th century saint and mystic Teresa of Avila famously pointed out. My church needs me. My hands can bring blessings. My love and my labor can show the world a glimpse of God’s kingdom.

Pastor Kerstin Weidmann

Pastor Kerstin posts her sermons on our website at www.stmatthews-sf.org in both English and German and also in English on our Facebook page for those who are unable to come to the church for whatever reason or for those who would just like to read the previous week's sermon again.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT'S REPORT

September 2, 2015

Dear Members and Friends of St. Matthew's,

Now that the relatively quiet and relaxed summer season is nearing its unofficial end with the coming of the Labor Day weekend, it is time to bring you up to date with the business of the church since our last "Good News" newsletter of May 18. As has been the Council's practice, we did not meet in July. The serious drought California and the Bay Area have been experiencing for the past four years however has continued without any relief, although an 'El Niño' wet winter is predicted.

Our entry into 'Ordinary Time' of the church's liturgical calendar has indeed been a time without a lot of activity or excitement. Of significance though, one major event has taken place: KinderHaus preschool has left St. Matthew's for a new home in a park in the Silver Terrace neighborhood of San Francisco. Their last day with children present occurred at the start of their summer break on June 26. It was initially thought they might be with us for several weeks (or even months) at the start of the fall term, but the renovation and licensing at their new location went quicker than expected and they were able to begin the semester in the clubhouse at Silver Terrace Playground on August 18. They have now removed all of their belongings from our social hall, leaving us with a lot of empty space and options to explore for its future use. We will miss them after having been with us for about ten years and seeing them become a fully licensed preschool. We wish them all the best as they continue their mission. In order to previously secure city and state licensing at St. Matthew's, KinderHaus was required to install an elaborate smoke/fire alarm detection system for which the Church Council has voted to now assume responsibility.

The annual Sierra Pacific Assembly of the ELCA took place on May 29-31 in Sacramento and was attended by Pastor Kerstin and Dorothy Praeger, our lay representative. The Pastor also attended a one week intensive seminar concerning church finances at California Lutheran University in Thousand Oaks as part of her continuing education. Accompanied by her husband, she is currently taking a week's vacation as they take her son to begin his freshman year at Bennington College in Vermont.

The church secretary, Elizabeth Karp, who also took over as our church treasurer in March, has the church's financial duties under good control and operating smoothly with many routine transactions now being handled automatically. Juergen Fehr, our finance committee chairman, has spent many hours straightening out back tax and other problems. David DeAngelis, our organist, is recently back from his six week summer course in Rochester, New York after working toward his master's degree. A big thank you is due Nicole Fahlman for substituting during Dave's absence. The church was fortunate to have Pastor Carola Scherf from Lübeck, Germany with us for a month assisting Pr. Kerstin and Elizabeth as she observed how a Lutheran Church in the U.S. operates. She also preached her first English language sermon several Sundays ago before departing back home.

Several musical events were hosted by the church this summer. On May 29 the Fog City Duo performed a guitar concert. Two local piano teachers, Naomi Stine and Colin Brady, held a joint piano and voice recital for their young students on July 18, and August 3 saw Tim Krol, a former Chanticleer singer now living in New York, perform a vocal concert. Most recently on August 23 and 25 the Golden Gate Men's Chorus, which rehearses twice weekly in our social hall, held their well-attended summer concert.

On August 2 a memorial service was held at the church for long-time member, Sigrid Raub, who passed away on July 4. Her family made a very generous memorial donation stipulating that it be used for the restoration and care of our pipe organ, which has not had any work done on it for quite a few years. The Council is now beginning to explore options as to what this will entail regarding needed repairs/upgrades/maintenance and the associated costs. This donation along with a hoped for grant from the German Consulate from their cultural fund will likely be used as the foundation for a fundraising drive for this project. The organ and stained glass windows are the church's two greatest physical assets, but both require regular care to preserve them for the future. Deferred work only gets more expensive and complicated with time.

The church budget continues to run monthly deficits which cannot be sustained over time as we continue to dip further into our savings; so again, I would ask you to give generously to continue the work and mission of sustaining our German tradition into the future. On July 1, Pastor Kerstin celebrated her one year anniversary with us. She needs your help in growing St. Matthew's and keeping it a viable institution for God's work. I wish to thank all who give generously of their time and resources to the church, but I am quite sure we can all do more.

And finally, I hope you all had a wonderful and relaxing summer, but now is the time to recommit ourselves to the tasks ahead of us. With God's guidance we can accomplish them.

Wishing you God's rich blessings, respectfully submitted,

William H Bremer, M.D.

Amelia Rosemarie Torres, daughter of Bryant and Elisabeth Torres, Valley Springs, CA was baptized on June 7.

Esin Wilder Kossack, son of Corey and Lindsay Cossack, Dublin, CA, was baptized on July 19.



Guest pastor from Germany

Pr. Carola Scherf from the Paul-Gerhardt- Gemeinde in Lübeck was with St. Matthew's for a continuing education internship from 8/1 through 8/25. She accompanied Pastor Kerstin on visits to members of St. Matthew's, conducted a few visits on her own, participated in our Sunday worship services, preached on 8/23, and observed both Elizabeth Karp's and the Pastor's work in the congregation. As well, she walked one night with Pr. Lyle Beckman as part of the SF Night Ministry team, and attended a 'Goddess Rosary' at 'Ebenezer-Her Church' (ELCA) on Portola. She went home with a treasure of experiences and assured Pastor Kerstin that she got a very good idea of what it means to do God's work in the city of San Francisco and the Bay Area.



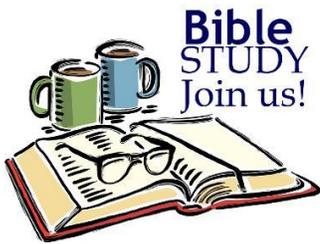
Mark Your Calendars!



“Waldlernermesse” sung by the **Damenchor Liederkranz**, under the direction of **Dr. Dietrich Erbeling**, on **Sunday, September 6 @ 11:00 a.m.**

Everyone is invited.

Annual Church Picnic
September 13 @ 10:30 a.m.
Oakland Nature Friends
3115 Butters Drive, Oakland
There will be NO food or beverages for sale.
Pot luck meal



Bible Study

Bible Study on the last Thursday of the month.
 Next Study: Thursday, **September 20 @ 2:00 p.m.**
 Over the next months, we will be studying the Gospel of Mark
 Everyone welcome

November 7, 2015 @ 11:00 a.m. Memorial service for **Fritz Freund**, a long time member of St. Matthew's who died on August 15.

Birthday Greetings

September

4 Jonathan Barnes
 10 Louise Tschudi
 26 Corinna Witt
 27 Jakob Berner
 30 Johannes Ginsbach

October

1 Lian Siem
 6 Jana Thalheim
 8 Michelle Berner



12 Walter Elliott
 13 Dorothy Praeger
 17 Elizabeth Karp
 22 Gerda Beisel
 Barbara Fehr
 25 Ilse H. Silbermann
 26 Bruce Leibroch
 26 Eli Angelich
 28 Robert Jesch

We apologize to any members and friends whose birthdays have been omitted. Please contact the Office if you wish to have your birthday included in future bulletins and newsletters. Thank you.



October 4

**Erntedankfest
Blessings of the Animals**
Details to be announced later.



Worship Schedule

First Sunday of the Month: Bilingual Service **11:00 a.m.** Every other Sunday of the month:
English service at **9:30 a.m.**: German language service at **11:00 a.m.**

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